

I yield to the gentleman from Maine.

Mr. ALLEN. I thank the gentleman for yielding. In conclusion, I thought I would try to simplify this about the prescription drug benefit. The Democrats are saying, all of us are saying, that what we want is a Medicare prescription drug benefit. That is, seniors would get their prescription drug benefit as part of the Medicare package.

This is exactly what every Member of this House has through his or her own insurance, because everyone in this House has some plan through the Federal employees insurance, and it is a plan that you sign up for and other Federal employees get, and if they have prescription drug coverage, which I suspect almost everyone here does, they have it as part of the plan. If they have a Blue Cross plan, they have a Blue Cross prescription benefit; if they have an Aetna plan, they have an Aetna prescription benefit.

All we are saying on the Democratic side of the aisle is, let us have a Medicare prescription drug benefit. And what the Republicans are saying is no, no, no, no, no, that would be wrong, because, after all, Medicare is a Federal health care plan. We would not want Medicare to provide a prescription drug benefit. That would be somehow wrong, because it is a government plan. That is nonsense. It is not right. It is absolutely not right.

The benefit, the prescription drug coverage should come through Medicare. It is the health care plan for our seniors and our disabled people, and there is no excuse to try to create some Rube Goldberg system involving private insurance companies and HMOs as an alternative. But that is what the folks on the other side of the aisle have been trying to put over on the American people.

Mr. PALLONE. I listened to that third debate between the two presidential candidates, and I was very upset to hear Governor Bush say he was providing a Medicare prescription plan. I believe he used the term Medicare.

Mr. ALLEN. He did.

Mr. PALLONE. Yet the Republican plan and his plan is a voucher. It is not under Medicare. It is a voucher that you get if you are below a certain income, not for most people, but if you are below a certain income, to go out and try to find an HMO or somebody to cover your prescription drugs. So, to even suggest that somehow this is a Medicare plan is not accurate. It is not under Medicare.

I think that is a major distinction between the Democrats and the Republicans on this issue, that we want to use traditional Medicare for the prescription drug benefit, and the Republican leadership does not. That is a key difference here, no question about it.

Mr. TURNER. If the gentleman will yield, you know, I think you are right on target. When you combine that fact with the fact that these Medicare+Choice plans are not even available, and you hear the proposal that Governor Bush makes to give the seniors a voucher so they just get 25 percent of the premium for their insurance covered by the government, what we are moving toward, and I think it is wrong, it is a system where no longer do you have the same coverage no matter where you live in this country.

Medicare, as I have always understood it, said that no matter where you live in this country, whether you live in the city or in the country, in rural America, urban America, you have the same coverage and the same benefit. And when you refuse to provide a prescription drug benefit under Medicare, and you only allow the HMOs to offer plans that can add on a prescription drug benefit, what you have done is changed in a very dramatic way what Medicare should mean to every senior, no matter where they live in this country.

Mr. PALLONE. I want to thank my colleagues for joining me tonight.

SPECIAL ORDERS GRANTED

By unanimous consent, permission to address the House, following the legislative program and any special orders heretofore entered, was granted to:

(The following Members (at the request of Mr. NADLER) to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material:)

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois, for 5 minutes, today.

Ms. CARSON, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. ETHERIDGE, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. PALLONE, for 5 minutes, today.

Mrs. CHRISTENSEN, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. ENGEL, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. VISCLOSKEY, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. SHERMAN, for 5 minutes, today.

Mrs. CAPPS, for 5 minutes, today.

(The following Members (at the request of Mr. SHAW) to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material:)

Mr. GEKAS, for 5 minutes, today.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN, for 5 minutes, October 30 and 31 and November 1, 2, and 3.

Mr. RILEY, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. SOUDER, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. HOSTETTLER, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. YOUNG of Alaska, for 5 minutes, October 30.

(The following Members (at their own request) to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material:)

Mrs. MEEK of Florida, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. BACHUS, for 5 minutes, today.

SENATE BILL REFERRED

A bill of the Senate of the following title was taken from the Speaker's table and, under the rule, referred as follows:

S. 3045. An act to improve the quality, timeliness, and credibility of forensic science services for criminal justice purposes, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

ENROLLED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTION SIGNED

Mr. THOMAS, from the Committee on House Administration, reported that that committee had examined and found truly enrolled bills and a joint resolution of the House of the following titles, which were thereupon signed by the Speaker:

H.R. 1651. An act to amend the Fishermen's Protective Act of 1967 to extend the period during which reimbursement may be provided to owners of United States fishing vessels for costs incurred when such a vessel is seized and detained by a foreign country, and for other purposes.

H.R. 3218. An act to amend title 31, United States Code, to prohibit the appearance of Social Security account numbers on or through unopened mailings of checks or other drafts issued on public money in the Treasury.

H.R. 5178. An act to require changes in the bloodborne pathogens standard in effect under the Occupational Safety and Health Act of 1970.

H.J. Res. 117. Joint resolution making further continuing appropriations for the fiscal year 2001, and for other purposes.

JOINT RESOLUTION PRESENTED TO THE PRESIDENT

Mr. THOMAS, from the Committee on House Administration, reported that that committee did on the following date present to the President, for his approval, a joint resolution of the House of the following title:

On October 26, 2000:

H.J. Res. 116. Making further continuing appropriations for the fiscal year 2001, and for other purposes.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I move that the House do now adjourn.

The motion was agreed to; accordingly (at 6 o'clock and 56 minutes p.m.), the House adjourned until tomorrow, Saturday, October 28, 2000, at 9 a.m.